# Editorial
# Questions and Complexities

Volume 19 (2003) of *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior* emphasizes the complex character of verbal behavior. Naturally, complexities of various sorts and degrees are found in any analysis of behavior, beginning with our simplest laboratory preparations (which are, of course, not simple at all). Yet despite the complexity that we find in virtually all environment-behavior interactions, there has always been something daunting about the complexity of verbal interactions. A convenient illustration comes from the opening pages of Skinner's (1957) *Verbal Behavior*, in which the nonverbal act of reaching for a glass of water is compared to the verbal act of asking for a glass of water. Although the former is readily analyzed in terms of the four-term contingency (of operant response class, establishing operation, reinforcer, discriminative stimulus), the latter example exhibits far greater complexity in a number of ways; for example, the role of arbitrary stimulus–response correspondences, a specialized and extensive history, the role of the listener's complex behavior, and so on. Skinner used the examples to make the point that both acts are fully encompassed by a behavioral analysis, but we clearly had much to learn about the specialized contingencies that would allow a comprehensive analysis of human verbal phenomena.

Although Skinner's (1957) *Verbal Behavior* provided clear descriptions of what now might be called derived relational phenomena, it was left to Sidman's (e.g., 1994) brilliant research to break new ground on the analysis of equivalence relations and their potential connections to the "symbolic" properties of verbal behavior. Various systematic treatments of this research began to appear (e.g., Sidman, 2000), and of these, one placed special emphasis upon direct relations between the growing research on equivalence and derived relational phenomena on the one hand, and the much larger domain of language and verbal behavior on the other. This systematic approach is the subject of a recent book edited by Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, and Roche (2001), entitled, *Relational Frame Theory: A Post-Skinnerian Account of Human Language and Cognition*.

This volume presents reviews of Hayes et al. (2001) by five prominent behavior analysts: Richard Malott, William McIlvane, J. Grayson Osborne, Kurt Salzinger, and Joseph Spradlin. These reviews, and the reply to the reviews by Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, and Roche, represent the first organized critical discussion of Relational Frame Theory among behavior analysts with extensive contributions to the areas of equivalence research and verbal behavior.

Four additional papers also address questions of complexity in verbal behavior. The papers by Osborne and Heath, and by Marion, Vause, Harapiak, Martin, Yu, Sakko, and Walters, address more questions of complex relational behavior. The paper by Luke examines multiple control in differing types of poetic literature. The final paper is as interesting and unconventional as its two authors. Jack Michael and Dick Malott close Volume 19 with an informal discussion on issues related to the phenomena of linguistic productivity (like most busy professionals, they apparently don't get the chance to talk about such things as often as they'd like, thus this inclusion of a free-operant verbal interaction).

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## REFERENCES

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